

MEDIA RELEASE

17 May 2012

Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee Report on Child and Youth Suicide in the NT

The NT Child Deaths Review and Prevention Committee is pleased to release its Report on Child and Youth Suicide in the NT. In 2010, the Committee conducted a comparative analysis of these suicides and found that the rate of child suicide in the NT was substantially higher than other jurisdictions. As a result the Committee commissioned the Menzies School of Health Research to conduct research into this issue.

The main aims of the research were to identify recent trends and methods in child and youth suicide, determining if there was any evidence of clustering of these deaths and establishing the existence of risk factors such as alcohol and substance misuse, child protection involvement, educational engagement, mental health contact and criminal history.

The Committee would like to acknowledge the well researched and comprehensive report that the Menzies School of Health Research has provided on the issue of child and youth suicide in the NT.

The research pointed out that over the preceding four decades there has been a steep increase in the Indigenous NT suicide rates. This increase, particularly in the last ten years, has been evident in Indigenous children and adolescents. It was noted that there is a relatively high percentage of females in the sample compared with rates elsewhere in Australia

The research revealed all but one were hanging deaths, and all but one were by Indigenous persons. They are widely distributed across the NT, ranging from very small very remote communities to larger towns and to Darwin, which had the largest number of cases. They do not necessarily occur in communities or regions with very high incidence of adult suicide.

Based on the Menzies School of Health Research report, the Committee has provided broad ranging recommendations relating to targeted prevention services, policy framework review, postvention services, trauma, coping mechanisms and self regulation, service and co-ordination of responses to suicides and continued development of the evidence base on suicide in the NT. Any program or resource developed in response is to be delivered as strength based and culturally appropriate with the aim of building resilience in Aboriginal children and young people through promoting and affirming importance of culture. It is hoped that the implementation of these recommendations will help minimise the occurrence of these tragic events in the future, which impact so greatly on the family, friends and communities of these children and young people.

More Information contact: Adam Harwood 8999 6076

Report is located at <http://www.childrenscommissioner.nt.gov.au/publications.html>

